

Below is a Christmas Tree Blessing that may be part of your Christmas gatherings. You could do this prayer in unison or some one could lead the blessing prayer.

Christmas Tree Blessing

*Dear God, two thousand years ago,
You brought Your Son, Jesus into this world
to teach us the power of love and sacrifice.
As we raise this tree, we remember His birth
and the meaning of His life for us.
Bless this tree as a symbol of our celebration
of Jesus' birth and our gratitude for His
sacrifice.
May the joy this tree brings and the gifts
we place under it remind us of the
many gifts You have given us.
We ask Your blessings upon our loved ones,
this day and always.
Amen.*

<http://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=377>

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER WEEKENDS

Engaged Encounter is a comprehensive weekend of marriage preparation. Upcoming weekends are **January 25-27, 2013** and **May 17-19, 2013**. Held at the beautiful **St. Leonard Retreat Center** in Avon, OH. For reservations or more info...www.clevelandencounter.com or 216-556-0424. "A wedding is a day – A marriage is a lifetime" – take the time to prepare well.

First Friday Club of Greater Akron

The First Friday Club Speaker for **January 11, 2013** at **Martin University Center, 105 Fir Hill, Akron, 44304**, will be **Doris Donnelly, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Theology and Director of the Cardinal Suenens Center at John Carroll University. Her topic will be "**What Catholics Need to Know About Islam.**" The cost of the luncheon program is \$15. Doors open at **11:15am**; the program begins at **12:00pm**, and ends promptly at **1:00pm**. Prepaid reservations can be made by sending a check to the First Friday Club of Greater Akron, 795 Russell Ave., Akron, OH 44307 no later than the Tuesday prior to each program. For more info...330-535-7668 or www.firstfridayclubofgreaterakron.org.

Catholic Volunteering

Interested in volunteering? Contact the **Catholic Volunteer Network** to receive a free copy of **RESPONSE 2013** at info@catholicvolunteernetwork.org, 1-800-543-5046, or www.catholicvolunteernetwork.org.

Successful Parenting

The lunch and lecture series is free and open to the public! Topics will include *Stress Management, Budgeting, Positive Discipline, First Aid and Safety, and Nutrition and Meal Planning*. Held on Tuesdays, January 8, 15, 22, and 29, and February 5 and 12 from 12:00pm to 1:30pm at Catholic Charities of Summit County, Blessed Trinity Site (300 E. Tallmadge Ave. Akron, OH 44310). To register or for additional information, please contact Maureen Capellas, Manager of Youth and Family Services at 330-475-0091 ext. 232 or at mcapellas@clevelandcatholiccharities.org.

RETRouvaille

Retrouvaille ("hope for troubled marriages") is a weekend and six follow-up sessions for couples who are struggling in their marriage. Held at the **Hilton Hotel, Beachwood, OH** on January 18-20, 2013. For more information or to register... www.helpourmarriage.org, 330-665-3506, or cleveland@retrouvaille.org.

Cana II

The **Cana II** Process addresses the unique issues of marriage and stepfamilies. The preparation includes a **Saturday**, and three additional evening sessions for stepparents of children under 18. Held **Saturday, January 26th, 2013** from 8:30am-6pm (5pm Mass) and **Thursdays, January 31st, February 7th and 14th, 2013** from 6:30pm-9pm at Holy Spirit Parish, 410 Lear Road, Avon Lake, Ohio, 44012. The cost is \$125 (deadline is January 18th, 2013). For a registration form, please call Jane at 216-334-2978 or visit www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/mfm. Please call Carol Petro at 216-334-2975 with questions.

SINGLE & PARENTING

Single & Parenting is a series of video seminars that teach effective parenting strategies, encouragement and insights on how to find hope as you parent alone. Held the first Friday of each month at **St. Joseph Church, 12700 Pearl Road, Strongsville, Ohio 44136** from 6:30-8:00pm. Cost is \$25 for 13 weeks. New attendees are welcome! For additional information, please visit www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/mfm or call Jane at 216-334-2978.

See the Church vestibule for information on upcoming events, job openings, registration forms, prayer cards, & more...



Come and See

On **January 8**, **Fr. Joseph Mamich**, will reflect on **“Scripture 101: Bible Basics for Catholics”** at **7:00pm** at **Blessed Trinity Church in Akron** through discussion and music. After the presentation, there will be an opportunity for small group discussion including time for individual conversations with Fr. Joseph. For **more information or to obtain a brochure...Linda Herold** (LindaAHart@aol.com or 330-376-5144) or visit www.dioceseofcleveland.org/summit.

A First Step

The First Step Programs are scheduled around the Diocese, open to anyone, with no pre-registration. They are offered as a way to reach out to those whose marriage, for whatever reasons or circumstances, is not valid in the Church, and find a way to re-establish full communion in the sacramental life of the Church. The next sessions are on Tuesday, February 5th, 2013 at 7:00pm at St. John Bosco Parish, 6480 Pearl Road, Parma Heights, Ohio 44130, phone: 440-886-3500, and on Tuesday, April 9th, 2013 at 7:00pm at St. Peter Parish, 3655 Oberlin Avenue, Lorain, Ohio 44053, phone: 440-282-9103. For additional information, please call 216-696-6525 ext. 4000, visit www.dioceseofcleveland.org/tribunal, or see pamphlets and the flyer in the Church vestibule.

OLE Open House

Our Lady of the Elms High School invites you to attend our Open House on Sunday, January 13th, 2013 from 12:00pm-2:00pm. Meet our outstanding faculty and learn more about The Elms. Our small class size provides a world of opportunities for girls to succeed. We learn like girls...try to keep up.

Catholic Singles Event

St. Ladislav Church located in Westlake is hosting a speed dating event for all Catholic singles (ages 25-45) on Saturday, February 9 at 7:30pm. Come for a fun evening, and meet others who share your faith and values. It is \$20 per person in advance and \$35 at the door. All proceeds will benefit the WAY Youth Group. For additional information or to register you can email ClevelandCatholicSpeedDating@gmail.com or call Amanda in the Parish Office at 440-835-2300.

NFP

The next "Why Natural Family Planning?" session will be held January 28, 2013 at 7:00pm at Holy Family, Stow in the Lower Church Hall, Rm. 1. During this 45 minute session, you will learn the latest 2012 data regarding the health risks of hormonal contraception, the benefits and myths of Natural Family Planning (this is not the rhythm method), the results of a contraceptive mentality since the 1960's, and a brief overview of a Natural Family Planning class: a safe, healthy, effective means of family planning which strengthens marriages. The most common reaction mentioned after the presentation is: "Why have we never heard this before?" Class open to anyone, and will help you make an informed decision regarding the benefits of Natural Family Planning. Contact Leo and Toni Doty at akdoty@kent.edu or 330-689-0632.

Visitation of Mary

Visitation of Mary Parish invites you to join their new 200 Club with the first drawing being February 15, 2013. For a yearly donation of only \$52, you could be one of two \$100 winners every month for eight months, plus be an additional \$500 winner in March 2013 and September 2013! Your ticket(s) must be purchased before February 15 or you will not qualify to be a winner. All 200 tickets must be sold! Ticket sales not limited to Visitation of Mary parishioners. For additional information or to register, please contact Jerry at 330-376-9227 or 330-535-4141, ext 12 (Jerry).

